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WASHINGTON  
ABSHIRE NAMED NEW AMBASSADOR

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David N. Abshire, who served in the Nixon administration as assistant secretary of state, was named Wednesday as the new U.S. ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

If confirmed by the Senate, he will replace W. Tapley Bennett, who is retiring.

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The job includes representing the United States on the North Atlantic Council, which meets regularly in Brussels to handle the day-to-day business of the alliance.

There are 15 member countries in addition to the United States: Britain, France, West Germany, Canada, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Norway, Denmark, Greece, Turkey, Portugal, Iceland and Spain.

President Reagan announced the nomination to the ambassadors of the NATO countries when they came to the White House on Wednesday to hear his proposal to the Soviets on the basing of nuclear missiles in Europe. Leading governments in NATO have endorsed the proposal.

Abshire, 56, is president of the Center for Strategic and International Studies of Georgetown University.

He was assistant secretary of state for congressional relations between 1970 and 1973. During the transition from the Carter to the Reagan administration, he served as director of the national security group which included the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency the Defense Department and several other agencies.

Born in Chattanooga, Tenn., Abshire served as a lieutenant in the U.S. army in World War II and later was graduated from the U.S. military academy at West Point.